Vermont...

Keeping In Touch

EPA New England

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A Vermont farm in the Northeast Kingdom
Photo by Barbara McGonagle

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An Open Letter to the People of Vermont

This report addresses some of the environmental challenges we face in Vermont, and some of the work we are doing to overcome those problems. I am pleased to present this annual report to you for the first time as Regional Administrator.

A significant goal for our work in Vermont will be helping Vermonters plan for and manage growth to keep their communities livable. To do so will require protecting open space and natural areas, while planning for and channeling development into appropriate areas. The state of Vermont has made great efforts in these areas, and we're proud to work with you and the communities throughout the state. We will continue to provide communities with resources to plan for and manage growth on a local level and we will work to ensure that federal projects protect open space and support more livable communities.

Another major priority that I as a mother am personally committed to is children's health. There is simply no more important investment we can make as a society than ensuring children -- our future -- are protected. At the same time, children are particularly vulnerable to environmental threats because of their unique exposure patterns. Asthma is one of our most widespread environmentally-influenced diseases – over 31,000 persons suffer from asthma in Vermont. Efforts to reduce outdoor air pollution go together with our campaign to reduce children's exposure to asthma triggers in the home and schools (we are collaborating with the Vermont Department of Health, the American Lung Association of Vermont and the University of Vermont). Another major focus is our work to reduce toxins like mercury and lead that are particularly dangerous to developing children.

We have set ambitious goals at EPA New England. And we know that we can't do it alone. But we also know that together, with the citizens of Vermont, we can make a difference. I, and all of my colleagues, look forward to working with you to help create a cleaner, healthier Vermont.

Mindy S. Lubber
Regional Administrator
EPA New England

Malletts Bay and Lower Winooski Bacteria Source Tracking Project

EPA began a new project this summer to identify sources of bacteria present in Malletts Bay and the lower Winooski River. Monitoring by the Town of Colchester has revealed recurrent elevated E. coli levels for a number of years in Malletts Bay and, to a lesser extent, near the outlet of the Winooski River. In order to clean up these waters and reduce beach closings, it's important to know where the bacteria is coming from. Is it coming, for example, from leaking septic systems, pet wastes, waterfowl, beavers, or farms? A cooperative endeavor with the Town of Colchester, the cities of Winooski and Burlington, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and the University of New Hampshire, this new project is using DNA fingerprinting to link bacteria samples in the streams with species in the watersheds. The DNA from E. coli present in water samples will be compared with the DNA from E. coli in fecal matter samples from wildlife, domestic animals, septic systems and wastewater treatment plants from within the project watersheds. The project will also make use of (and contribute to) an eastern United States DNA "source library" being developed from species in New Hampshire and the Southeastern U.S. The DNA analysis portion of the project is being performed by the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire. This type of bacteria source tracking (using DNA fingerprints) has been used elsewhere in the country, but the Vermont project and a concurrent project in New Hampshire represent the first full scale application of this method in New England.

A sign warns swimmers of high bacteria levels at the mouth of Smith Hollow Brook in Colchester. Photo by Ben Gabos

Dry and wet weather monitoring for this project began in August. It is hoped that project results, which are expected in early spring, will provide an indication of the percentage of E. coli at each water sampling station attributable to sources such as dogs, waterfowl, cows, and humans. Once this information is available, EPA plans to work with the local communities and the state to help remedy identified sources in the watersheds. This project is one of several in New England that EPA is supporting this year through a special program. The program is designed to bring resources from various EPA branches (in this case the Office of Ecosystem Protection and EPA's Regional Laboratory) to improve water quality in targeted geographic areas. For more information on this project, contact Eric Perkins at perkins.eric@epa.gov or (617) 918-1602.

Promoting Energy Star Products in Residential New Construction in Vermont

Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) is a non-profit energy services organization, formed in 1986 to help reduce the costs of energy - both economic and environmental - to customers. VEIC provides technical, financing, design, and hands-on implementation energy efficiency and renewable energy services to public and private-sector clients in Vermont, throughout the U.S. and overseas. Recently, VEIC became Vermont's Energy Efficiency Utility Contractor.

In January 1998 EPA requested proposals for projects that advance national, regional and local market transformation to energy efficient technologies and practices that build upon the already existing Energy Star programs. VEIC was one of more than 30 proposals received and was awarded a Market Transformation Grant by EPA along with 7 others (nationally) in the fall of 1998.

VEIC's proposal "Promoting Energy Star Products in Residential New Construction in Vermont" was to build on current State efforts to educate the building industry about Vermont's new Residential Energy Code by developing and implementing 15 jointly-sponsored workshops. The workshops would focus on how to specify and sell EPA Energy Star Products and forthcoming equipment; provide examples of products that meet EPA Energy Star specifications; how to sell homes and products using VEIC materials, the Energy Star sales workbook and HomeCal software recently developed by EPA for this purpose; and highlight economic and environmental benefits of solar energy.

After a period of promoting these workshops and experiencing low builder turnout, VEIC revised it's work plan to target lumber retailers and sales staff. They found that these retailers and sales people have had no training on Energy Star Products or the benefits that are available to both the lumberyard and the builder. The lumberyard sales staff are in regular contact with builders regarding the purchase of windows, insulation, lighting and other Energy Star products. So, the work plan was modified to target lumberyards and provide on-site Energy Star sales training for staff along with point-of-sale Energy Star displays, and to form agreements with the lumberyards to participate as an Energy Star trade ally. This grant is scheduled to be completed by June 2001.

EPA New England's Smart Growth Initiative

Smart growth is a new focus at EPA. From Brownfields to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, we are looking at the ways that EPA programs and policies affect growth and development in New England. We have put forward a Smart Growth Action Plan which recognizes the need to maintain a healthy environment as well as sustainable economic development and a high quality of life. This Action Plan has four parts:

- Strengthening local capacity
- Reshaping EPA programs and policies
- Building effective partnerships
- Elevating public awareness

Many activities throughout Vermont are helping to support the tenets of this Action Plan.

Strengthening Local Capacity

Over the past two years, funds from grant programs have helped to support numerous innovative and thoughtful projects in Vermont communities and statewide organizations.

Last year $98,000 in Sustainable Development funds helped Burlington initiate the Legacy Project, a community-wide visioning exercise for the future of the City. This year the Conservation Law Foundation is receiving $200,000 to bring together interested parties to work on revitalizing rail service in northern New England, and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development is receiving $124,000 to work with towns to evaluate alternative growth patterns around highway interchanges.

Liveable Communities Grant funds have supported additional projects. The Mad River Valley Planning District received $25,000 to work on the Irasville Growth Center Planning Project, designed to cluster development in the growth center and relieve pressures in surrounding rural areas. The Windham Regional Commission will be receiving $25,000 to pursue an education and outreach project within the County to help people understand implications of growth and how to address it. The Vermont Forum on Sprawl received $25,000 to develop a best development practices handbook for local officials who carry a large responsibility in making land use decisions. The Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns will receive $25,000 to carry out a research, outreach, and education program designed to provide local and regional officials and citizens throughout Vermont with information and training on the tax implications of growth in Vermont's new era of statewide property tax-sharing (Act 60). Each of these projects will provide valuable lessons for other communities in Vermont and New England faced with development decisions.

In addition to grant support, EPA has developed tools to help local communities think about land use decisions in a broader way. The Chittenden County Municipal Planning Organization (MPO) has been selected as one of 20 community organizations nationally to pilot the use of one such tool, the Smart Growth Index. This is a software program developed by EPA to evaluate the environmental and economic impacts of alternative land use scenarios in a particular area. It will be used by the MPO to assess the design of proposed rail service from Burlington to Essex Junction. Presently the Index is most effectively able to evaluate changes to air resources and energy use, while impact to water resources will be added. Results from the Chittenden County case study will help to refine the Index for future users.

In order to strengthen local government's ability to make sound land use decisions, EPA has partnered with state and regional entities to develop a Fundamentals of Smart Growth training program. A short slide show helps to increase awareness and understanding of smart growth issues and provide increased access to resources within state and federal agencies. This show is available upon request.

Reshaping EPA Programs and Policies

In the New England office, EPA has begun to look strategically at how our own programs affect land use patterns. Our Brownfields Program and Urban Environmental Initiative are demonstrating that restoring urban environments not only improves public health, but restores economic security. Programs which provide seed money for loans to communities to support drinking water and wastewater infrastructure are being assessed because, in many cases, sprawl is an unexpected consequence of building new infrastructure. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is pursuing a similar evaluation within the State.

Building Effective Partnerships

EPA has created a Federal Livable Communities Partnership comprised of more than a dozen federal agencies that is exploring how to help communities grow in ways that make environmental as well as economic sense. Members of the Partnership have affirmed that it is the responsibility of Federal agencies to ensure that their programs, policies, and institutional frameworks do not contribute to sprawl.

Evaluating Public Awareness

EPA has been meeting with the editorial boards of newspapers throughout New England to encourage them to discuss sprawl and related development

Lake Champlain Basin Program's Connection to EPA

The U.S. Government, through the EPA and other federal agencies, provides the Lake Champlain Basin Program with funds in a variety of ways. The state governments of New York and Vermont, as well as the provincial government of Quebec, also provide funding for work identified in the Lake Champlain Basin Program's management plan Opportunities for Action. EPA's share directly funds the operations of the Lake Champlain Basin Program, through its Steering Committee. This body is comprised of top-level environmental officials representing state and provincial government in Vermont, New York, and Quebec; local government representatives; the Citizen Advisory Committee Chairs; the Technical Advisory Committee Chair; and three federal agency representatives. The Lake Champlain Basin Program is a multilateral partnership between local citizens and organizations, state and provincial governments, and federal agencies.

Basin Projects

Mercury Manometer

One of this year's new projects will reduce the potential of exposure to mercury in the basin. The Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District, in a competitive grant process, was awarded $20,200 this spring to replace up to 84 mercury filled manometers on dairy farms throughout the basin. A manometer is a device used in the milking parlor to measure the vacuum (suction) being generated by the milking machines. Traditionally, these instruments have contained up to a pound of mercury. Replacements are now available that do not contain this toxic material. Under this program, dairy farmers in the basin will be contacted and encouraged to participate. They will be provided pamphlets that explain the hazards of mercury to humans and livestock, and it will give details about how they can request a free replacement of their mercury-filled manometer. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Solid Waste Management Districts of Vermont are also providing funding for this project.

The control of mercury is important, because it is toxic to humans, livestock, and other animals. Small amounts of mercury in the body can cause severe neurological (brain, spine, nerve) damage in adults, and damage the development of these systems in children. Mercury can be introduced into the body by ingestion (usually eating contaminated fish), inhaling fumes, and by skin contact. Removing mercury from milking parlors by replacing manometers will help reduce the risk of mercury exposure for farm families. It will also lessen the chance that mercury will be disposed of improperly and wind up in the tissues of Lake Champlain fish. For more information on the health effects of mercury and fish consumption advisories, contact the Vermont Department of Health at (800) 464-4343 (Toll Free in Vermont only), or visit their website (http://www.state.vt.us/health/). EPA New England is also planning a new feature ("Communities") for our website (http://www.epa.gov/region1/) which will debut later this fall with some mercury information.

A June day on Lake Champlain, Burlington, VT. Photo: Erik Beck

Phosphorus and TMDL

In addition to continuing the long-term monitoring program that began in 1992, the Lake Champlain Basin Program this year has seen a couple of developments that are helping to address phosphorus concerns in the lake. The first is a report on phosphorus entering Missisquoi Bay and how excess amounts of this aquatic plant nutrient can be reduced there. This report:

- Provides background on previous work to reduce phosphorus loadings;
- Provides a review of phosphorus loadings to Missisquoi Bay;
- Recognizes a division of responsibility between Quebec and Vermont for phosphorus reduction in Missisquoi Bay;
- Provides a summary of programs and policies in Quebec and Vermont to reduce phosphorus loads to lakes and ponds.

A second phosphorus related study was also completed this year. At the request of the Steering Committee, a group known as the Phosphorus Reduction Team reviewed the progress being made on reaching the phosphorus reduction targets set out in Opportunities for Action, the long-term management plan for Lake Champlain. The group discovered that the program is well ahead of schedule for the interim 2001 goal of a 25% cut of phosphorus inputs to the lake. However, the group also discovered that under the current plan for implementing point and non-point source controls, it is not certain that the long-term reduction goal by 2016 will be met. The report concluded that new phosphorus reduction measures will need to be considered in order to meet this target.

(Lake Champlain Basin Program's Connection to EPA, continued)

For more information, or for a copy of these reports, contact the Lake Champlain Basin Program at the numbers listed below.

The work detailed above on studying the loadings of phosphorus into Lake Champlain will provide valuable feedstock as the states of Vermont and New York prepare TMDLs for the lake. A TMDL—or total maximum daily load—is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. In other words, it is the sum of the allowable loads of a single pollutant from all contributing point and nonpoint sources, and includes a margin of safety and consideration of seasonal variations. In addition, a TMDL contains the reductions needed to meet water quality standards and allocates those reductions among the sources in the watershed. For more information on TMDLs, see EPA's web site (http://www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl). For further information on Lake Champlain, contact Erik Beck at (617)918-1606.

For More Information

This column presents a sampling of what's new in the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Unfortunately, due to space considerations, only a limited number of projects are highlighted here. For more information, visit the Program's website at www.lcbp.org, or give them a call (802) 655-6382, or toll free in VT and NY at (800) 468-5227.

Lake Champlain Basin Program Partners with Local Television Station

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) has formed an exciting media partnership! Since May 1999, WPTZ, the local NBC affiliate, has aired weekly Champlain 2000 stories on the six o'clock evening news. Champlain 2000 is about the environment and quality of life in the Champlain Valley, the people and projects that protect them and the actions and issues that may threaten them. Key Bank is WPTZ's commercial partner for Champlain 2000.

News anchor interviewing a student

Over 60 news stories have aired to date, covering issues such as lawn and garden pesticide use, zebra mussels, water chestnuts, and student efforts to replenish Atlantic salmon. Three half-hour quarterly specials have also aired. The July 2000 quarterly special covered recreation, including the Paddlers' Trail, Bikeways and Celebrate the Lake, all of which are supported by the LCBP.

At the end of each Champlain 2000 story and on previews, WPTZ lists the LCBP's website (www.lcbp.org) as the source for additional information. The LCBP also creates many story concepts and helps WPTZ contact organizations. Complete scripts of the series can be found on WPTZ's website www.wptz.com.

Champlain 2000 has won several awards. Last April, WPTZ, the LCBP and KeyBank, received EPA Merit Awards from Region 2 (New York). Champlain 2000 has also earned two regional Edward R. Murrow Awards from the Radio and Television News Directors Association and was nominated for an EMMY. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation also presented WPTZ with a media award last spring.

While the LCBP works cooperatively with all forms of media, this partnership provides extra exposure to many of the local organizations working to improve the Champlain Basin. For more information, contact Nicole Ballinger or Colleen Hickey at the Lake Champlain Basin Program at (802) 655-6382.

National Ski Areas Association Environmental Charter

A two year collaboration among EPA, the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), and nationwide stakeholders led to the association's commitment to develop an Environmental Charter. The Charter, finalized in June, is a public statement of environmental values, principles, and a commitment to implement voluntary changes for resorts and a visitor code. The Charter will take resorts beyond compliance. It will focus initially on resort operations, but will cover siting and development as well as community relations. The Charter encourages earlier stakeholder involvement by all. An annual report card on progress implementing the charter will be prepared. The following Vermonts Ski Areas are signatories to the charter: Bolton Valley Resort, Bromley Mountain Resort, Killington Resort, Mount Snow Resort, Okemo Mountain Resort, Smugglers' Notch Resort, Stowe Mountain Resort, Stratton Mountain and Sugarbush Resort.

Drinking Water Week

Many thanks go out to the Vermont Drinking Water Week Committee and the many sponsors that made this year's Water Fair a great success. The Fair was held on Friday, May 12 on the State House Lawn. The Water Fair featured an Awards presentation, an educational ground water model, displays of posters from the poster contest, performances by the National Theatre for Children, water related lawn games, educational displays, and a well drilling rig from H.A. Manosh. Over 225 students attended this year's program. Students were required to go on an informational scavenger hunt and upon completing it they received Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

Enviroscape Demonstration

Dave Harris from EJ Prescott was the master of ceremonies for the awards presentation. Dave introduced Lt. Governor Douglas Racine who gave a very motivating speech to the students about protecting our water sources. He then presented the poster contest winners with their certificates. Jerry Potamis the EPA Vermont Program Director gave an Educator of the Year Award to Marita Johnson from the Riverside Middle School in Springfield and Lee Bonson from the CP Smith School also received the same award but could not attend. Lee received her award, presented in her class, by Eric Perkins from EPA New England. Spruce tree seedlings were given out to all the students and guests who attended.

This year's Poster Contest had approximately 90 entries from around the state. It's never any easy job judging this contest as there are so many well thought out posters and talented artists submitting. This years winners were:

Grade 6

1st Danielle Lamb, Wells Village School - $100 Savings Bond
2nd Caitlin McNeill, Currier Memorial School - $50 Savings Bond
Honorable Mention Andrea Florence, Woodford Elementary

Grade 5

1st Sara David, Charlestown Elementary - $100 Savings Bond
2nd Megan Surdam, Woodford Hollow Elementary - $50 Savings Bond
Honorable Mention, Heather Chambeau, Mettawee Community School

Grade 4

1st Richie Levesque, Woodford Hollow - $100 Savings Bond
2nd Nicole Troy, Mettawee Community School - $50 Savings Bond
Honorable Mention, Phillip DiMambo, Charlestown Elementary

Schools that participated in the poster contest: Mettawee Community School in West Pawlet, Walden School in West Danville, Woodford Hollow School, Currier Memorial School in Danby, Charleston Elementary School in West Charleston.

EPA and IBM Sign Innovative Agreement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced on July 31, 2000 that IBM's facility in Essex Junction, Vermont, would be given regulatory flexibility in handling its wastewater from a new manufacturing process that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. As part of the agreement signed between the company, EPA New England and the state of Vermont, IBM's new process for producing computer chips will reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions released from the facility. Also as part of the agreement, IBM will make other changes to its manufacturing processes to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a total of 40% at its Essex Junction plant. The agreement was negotiated under EPA's Project XL (eXcellence and Leadership) Program, which gives companies flexibility in implementing innovative projects to achieve environmental benefits.

In the agreement, EPA promised to redefine as "non-hazardous" the waste coming out of the process. The new process uses an electroplating technique to deposit copper on to the chips. The rinse waters from this process are combined with other wastewaters, which produces a sludge that is officially regulated as hazardous waste because all wastewaters from plating processes are defined as hazardous. Since copper is not considered hazardous in this waste stream, EPA was willing to make this redefinition. The redefinition will provide the same level of environmental protection while allowing the company to continue its innovative manufacturing process. It also acknowledges the environmental benefits associated with this new process. If successful, use of this process at other facilities could achieve similar greenhouse gas reductions and energy savings benefitting both the environment and business. The new project will run for five years at the Essex Junction facility.

EPA's Project XL is a national pilot program that allows state and local governments and businesses to collaborate with EPA to develop innovative strategies to test better and more cost- effective ways of protecting the environment and public health. Under the program, EPA provides participants with regulatory flexibility to achieve better environmental results while assuring that specific XL criteria are met. Among the required criteria are: superior environmental results beyond those that would have been achieved under existing regulations and policies, high potential for transferring the technology to other facilities; a strong history of environmental compliance, and strong support from stakeholder groups.

EPA's Environmental Merit Awards

This award, part of our Earth Day 2000 celebration, enables us to recognize the individuals, government agencies, businesses, and advocacy groups who have committed their time and energy to improve the quality of life and natural environment for those of us who live and work in New England.

Lake Champlain Citizen Advisory Committees - Vermont, New York, Quebec

The Citizen Advisory Committees for Lake Champlain, established in 1988, have been a strong and effective voice for improving environmental management of the lake. The advisory committees are a critical component of the ongoing protection and management of the diverse issues facing the lake. The Vermont group, led by Buzz Hoerr, has worked aggressively to ensure that progress is being made on phosphorus reduction efforts. The New York committee, with Ron Ofner as chair, has worked tirelessly over the years to focus attention in Albany on Lake Champlain, a difficult task in a state that includes the Great Lakes, Long Island Sound and the New York City watershed. The Quebec group, spearheaded by Kenny Miller, worked with the provincial government to create a corporation with the responsibility of making improvements to local infrastructure to reduce phosphorus loadings. The groups also helped launch an innovative public-private partnership called Champlain 2000, in which Channel 5 aired weekly segments on lake issues for an 18-month period.

Lake Parker Association, West Glover, Vermont

The Lake Parker Association, through the leadership of President Bob Johnson and watershed committee Chair Madeline Ducham, has done an excellent job assessing conditions in the lake's watershed and building community support to correct numerous nonpoint sources of pollution in the watershed and avoid problems in the future. Last year the association completed a three-year watershed survey, a process that involved scores of volunteers walking sections of the shoreline and watershed to document pollution problems. Those results will pave the way for restoration work in the future. Some of that work is already underway, including the stabilization of a major road erosion problem in Glover that was handled by the town road crew and a group of volunteers. The Association's work serves as an exemplary model of the kind of local participation that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is looking for all across the state.

EPA's Environmental Education Grants

Association of VT Recyclers Grant
Amount: $4,960
PO Box 1244
Montpelier, VT 05601
Contact: Connie Leach Bisson

Regional Collaboration in Environmental Theater - This Association is widely recognized for its environmental theater troupe and original plays which have toured K-8 schools throughout Vermont for more than 8 years. The grant money is used to explore sharing the Association's resources with neighboring states. The group tours 6 elementary/middle schools, (reaching about 1,250 students and 65 teachers), educating them on environmental issues through theater. The group also hosts training for teachers to incorporate this creative form of teaching into their workplans.

Lake Champlain Science Center
Grant Amount: $23,500
1 College Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Contact: Betsy Rosenbluth

Eco-Peers Project - The Science Center and Vermont Institute for Science, Math and Technology work with 20 middle and high school teachers to develop and implement standards-based curriculum about the Lake Champlain basin, create water quality kits and materials, and publish the curriculum on the Science Center web page. Through all the activities planned during this grant, over 20 middle and high teachers participate, serving over 400 students each year.

Paul G. Keough Earth Artists Award

EPA New England Office presented the twenty-eighth annual Paul G. Keough Earth Artists Program Awards to the following Vermont students in kindergarten through grade 6.

Cornerstone School, St. Johnsbury, VT
Teachers: Kim Smith and
Heather Manning
Class winner

The Acorn School, Charlotte, VT
Teacher: Sharon Robinson
Class winner

State Street School, Windsor, VT
Teacher: Marie Carmichael
Kindergarten Class winner

Charleston Elementary,
W. Charleston, VT
Teacher: Donna Piette
Student Winner:
David Morse, 2nd grade
Teacher: Mrs. Moyer
Student Winner:
Justin Whipple, 3rd grade

Williamstown Elementary School,
Williamstown, VT
Teacher: Mrs. Carson
Student Winner:
Morgan Fassett, 4th grade

Developing Water System Technical, Managerial & Financial Capacity

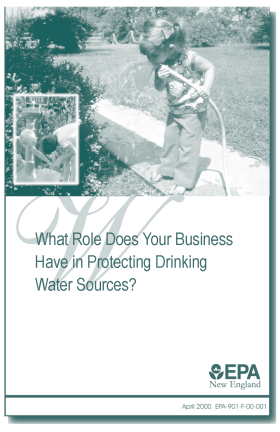
The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 (SDWA) allow for the creation of a program to develop the capacity of water systems to provide safe drinking water. Water systems must achieve adequate technical, managerial, and financial capacity. Technical capacity pertains to the physical infrastructure of the water system including the adequacy of the water source, adequacy of the infrastructure and the ability of the system personnel to operate and maintain the system and to implement the requisite technical knowledge. Managerial capacity pertains to the system's institutional and administrative abilities including ownership, staffing, organization, and accountability. Financial capacity pertains to the system's ability to acquire and manage adequate financial resources including revenue sufficiency, credit worthiness, and fiscal controls, to properly operate. Capacity Development is an important part of the SDWA's emphasis on preventing drinking water problems. The capacity development provisions of the SDWA require States to: (1) develop and implement programs to ensure that new community water (CW) systems and new nontransient noncommunity water (NTNCW) systems demonstrate capacity and (2) develop a strategy to assist existing CW and NTNCW systems in acquiring and maintaining capacity. The States can use Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSR F) set-aside funds for their capacity development and implementation efforts. States that do not satisfy the requirements are subject to a withholding of 20% of their DWSRF capitalization grant. A CW system is a public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by year round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year round residents. A NTNCW system is a public water system that is not a community water system and regularly serves at least 25 of the same people over 6 months of the year.

The State of Vermont Water Supply Division has diligently worked in creating an effective capacity development program and in meeting the provisions of the SDWA. In September,1999, the Division finalized and the EPA New England approved Vermont's "New System Capacity Program". The program includes a Capacity Guidance Document for New Public Water Systems that discusses control points for implementation of new system capacity and contains construction permit and permit to operate application forms. Vermont's implementation of this program will help ensure that new CW systems and new NTNCW systems have the capability to consistently provide safe drinking water.

Since January, the Vermont Water Supply Division has focused on establishing a Capacity Development Strategy. In January and February, the Division formed a voluntary Capacity Development Strategy Advisory Workgroup consisting mainly of water system owners/operators; local officials; representatives from municipal, rural water, and environmental organizations; and persons from other state agencies. Since March the Division has held numerous workgroup meetings and statewide stake-holder meetings to encourage and obtain recommendations, comments, suggestions, and overall input for the creation of a beneficial state-wide Capacity Development Strategy. On June 15, 2000, the Division held a public meeting in Montpelier to present and discuss the draft "Vermont Existing Public Water System Capacity Strategy" and to solicit additional comments. The Division will finalize the strategy, submit it to EPA New England for approval, and begin implementing the strategy by the end of September, 2000.

New Drinking Water Protection Brochure Available

EPA has produced a new brochure entitled "What Role Does Your Business Have in Protecting Drinking Water Sources" which is being sent this summer to New England businesses located in drinking water source protection areas. The brochure notifies businesses about the source water protection program, encourages them to find out if they are in a drinking water source protection area, and provides suggestions to protect drinking waters.



To obtain copies of the brochure or further information about the upcoming drinking water source assessments and EPA's business activities, please contact MaryJo Feuerbach at (617) 918-1578.

Epa Contacts

For general information, customer assistance, to report a tip or complaint about a potential environmental violation or to request assistance from the New England Environmental Assistance Team:

Customer Assistance Line:
(888)EPA-REG1(888-372-7341)

Emergency Response:
(for reporting spills/environmental incidents):
(800)424-8802

Criminal Investigation Division (24 hours):
(617)918-2300

EPA New England Library
(888)EPA-LIBR(888-372-5427)

EPA New England Web Site:
http://www.epa.gov/region1

Building an Ecological Economy

Creating Commercial Advantage through Sustainable Business Practices

A Conference planned for October 17, 2000
By Doug Kievit-Kylar

Vermont businesses, government institutions, and communities are witnessing the evolution of a major shift in business practices. Recent applications of "sustainability" principles to organizational decision-making have provided Vermont with exciting examples of how to advance economically while protecting critical environmental resources and community assets. To continue this progress, the State of Vermont, in collaboration with others, is offering a day-long conference to promote and advance purchasing practices toward greater environmental, economic, and community benefit. The conference, will capitalize on and highlight the significant public and private efforts already underway to shift toward a more ecological and sustainable economy. Drawing from a host of Vermont examples, this conference will highlight best practices in both the private and public sectors. Presenters from Vermont businesses, government agencies, and organizations will share stories of how they adapted their policies and practices to improve their economic and environmental performance.

Building an Ecological Economy will demonstrate the immense market potential available to those who apply sustainable business practices. To find out more about the conference and to receive registration materials, please contact conference organizer Cindy Delaney at Delaney Meeting and Event Management, Champlain Mill #36, One Main Street, Winooski, VT 05404. Cindy can be reached via email at delaney@together.nets

Upper Connecticut River Study

EPA New England, the Connecticut River Joint Commission, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources are working cooperatively to conduct a study of the Connecticut River. The purpose of the study is to determine the "baseline quality" of the river as a measure of the general health of the river. These baseline data will be used as benchmarks against which any future changes will be measured. An additional outcome of the study will be individual community profiles which will contain suggested actions to be taken by the states, communities and individuals to reduce impacts on the river system. Most of the field work will be conducted through September 2000. Reports should be available to the various agencies and the public early next year.

Approximately 100 miles of the main stem Connecticut River from Pittsburg, NH to West Lebanon, NH will be investigated. Selected tributaries will also be studied in order to measure their impacts on the Connecticut River. There are two major parts

of the study:

1. Sediment samples will be collected from approximately 100 locations to determine the current health of the river.

2. Nineteen New Hampshire communities and seventeen Vermont communities fronting or near the river will be inventoried to identify potential sources of pollution that may impact the river. Interviews and site visits will be conducted with local officials, potential industrial sources and others that may have an impact on the river.

This study represents a new direction by the three agencies and is considered to be a pilot project. The study will focus on the relatively "pristine" portions of the river instead of the traditional agency emphasis on contaminated areas. This effort has been described as being similar to a medical check up. In that analogy, the sampling effort might be equivalent to having your blood analyzed and the investigation of potential "sources" would be equivalent to the doctor checking out your specific aches and pains. The Connecticut River was selected for this study because of the excellent working relationships among the river communities and citizens that have been established by the Connecticut River Joint Commission. In addition, the study will help fulfill a commitment made by former EPA Regional Administrator John DeVillars when he visited the area last year.

Pollution sources in the upper "pristine" areas of the river are usually not considered to be very significant in terms of the problems facing the rest of the river. However, even a very small amount of added material can have an impact. For example, material added to the river in Pittsburg has the ability to impact several hundred miles of the river's water quality, uses, wildlife and fish as that material migrates downstream. The study hopes to identify some of these problems and offer suggestions to minimize their impacts on the river.

For further information, contact Don Smith of EPA at: 617-918-1433 or via e-mail at smith.donald@epa.gov

New "Healthy Homes" Initiative

Do you know that the average American spends about 90% of the time inside? That hundreds of Vermont children are still lead poisoned each year? That radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer? Many people are surprised by these facts. For the past 20 years or so, there has been concern about the quality of the air outside, with major federal legislation passed to reduce the levels of outdoor air pollution. But few people realize that the *indoor environment* may be an even bigger concern.

In an effort to better address indoor environmental issues, the Vermont Department of Health's Health Protection Division is undertaking a new initiative called "Healthy Homes." Existing staff, with diverse areas of expertise, has been reorganized into the Children's Environmental Health Program. This new program is taking a holistic approach to looking at the indoor environmental hazards that may put family members, especially young children, at risk. These include some of the more well known risks - like lead paint and household poisons - to the less known risks associated with radon and contaminated drinking water.

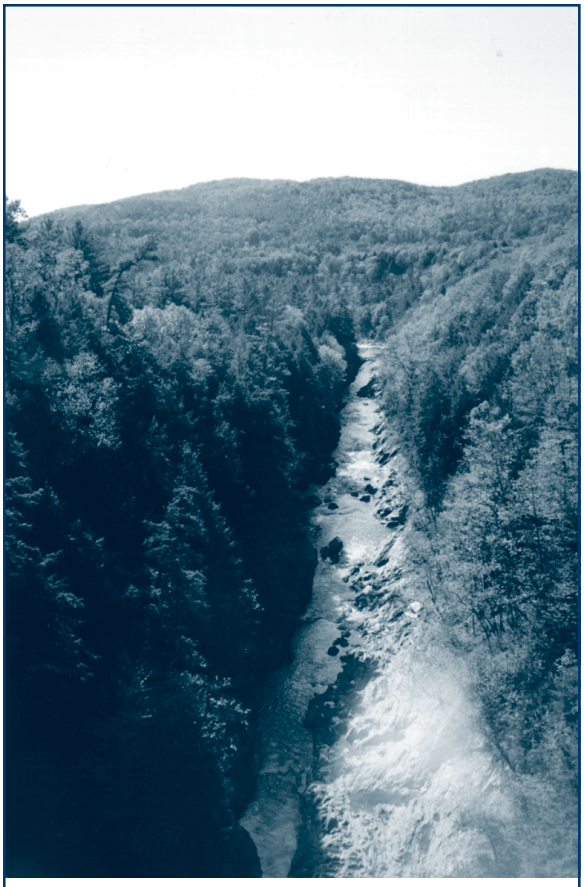
The Children's Environmental Health Program staff has expertise in lead poisoning prevention, radon testing and mitigation methods, indoor air quality and drinking water. They are available to answer questions, provide technical assistance, and furnish information to the general public, as well as provide presentations to groups interested in learning more about these important health issues.

healthy homes

Vermont Department of Health
1-800-439-8550

A new guidebook with important advice on environmentally safe home renovation has just been released. "The renovation workbook" will be distributed to homeowners, rental property owners, and child care owners. Although this publication includes guidelines for lead paint safety, other information about radon, drinking water, asbestos, pest control, and indoor air quality are also included in this workbook. The Children's Environmental Health Program staff worked with various federal (Department of Housing and Urban Development-HUD and EPA) and state agencies, not-for profit and profit organization to integrate the healthy homes topics into one workbook. HUD and Centers for Disease Contol funds were used to produce this document.

With grant funding from HUD, the Vermont Department of Health is planning intensive outreach to communities on the Healthy Homes initiative:



Queche Gorge. Photo by Barbara McGonagle

Collaboration with the League of Cities and Towns

Within the next year, the Vermont Department of Health, collaborating with the League of Cities and Towns, will host several regional trainings on Healthy Homes. Invited guests will include town clerks, town administrators, town health officers, and residents with an interest in improving their community's indoor environments. Towns will also be eligible to apply for small grants to fund their own Healthy Homes initiatives.

Collaboration with local Emergency Medical Services

Seven EMS organizations across the state were awarded grant money to implement "Healthy Homes" activities to the communities they serve. The organizations that will receive $2,150.00 each include:

- Brandon Area Rescue Squad
- Barton Ambulance
- Colchester Rescue
- Newport Ambulance Service, Inc
- Regional Ambulance Service, Inc-Rutland
- Rescue Inc-Brattleboro
- So. Burlington Fire Dept

Each organization had previously attended an all-day workshop at the April EMS Conference where they learned about lead, radon, indoor air including mold, drinking water, and pest control issues. Each organization has developed a plan that encompasses lead paint, children's injury prevention topic, radon testing, and their choice of indoor air quality or drinking water. The plans will be implemented and evaluated through June 30, 2001.

For more information about Healthy Homes, contact the Department of Health at 1 (800) 439-8550 or (802) 652-0358.

A Green Hotel in the Green Mountain State

By Doug Kievit-Kylar

Living a life consistent in both word and deed can be difficult but very rewarding. Ask Shari Brown and Tony Clark, proprietors of the Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen Vermont, about the rewards of living lightly on the planet and they'll tell you not only does it feel like the right thing to do, it also feels good and is good for business.

The Blueberry Hill Inn is one of more than 25 properties officially designated as "A Green Hotel in the Green Mountain State" by the Vermont Business Environmental Partnership. The Partnership is a voluntary, technical assistance and business recognition program managed by the Environmental Assistance Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Vermont Small Business Development Center. The Blueberry Hill Inn was recognized for its many environmental initiatives, environmental accomplishments, and its comprehensive environmental management system.

Managing a Vermont country inn with time-honored strategies of frugality creates a simple elegance that decreases waste, protects the environment and contributes to a quality experience for guests. Frugality, in this case does not mean depriving guests of the amenities that might make their stay at the Inn more comfortable or more memorable. Instead, it means avoiding over-packaged goods, it means purchasing locally grown organic fruits and vegetables and composting food scraps, and it means making it easier for everyone to recycle.

Much of what is done on behalf of the environment at the Blueberry Hill Inn, however, includes things the guest never even realizes. Few guests, for example, know that the new energy-efficient windows keep them warmer in winter and cooler in the summer; that the non-toxic laundry and other cleaning supplies used keep the indoor air safe to breathe, that waste paper is shredded and given to a local dairy farmer for bedding, or that water and energy conservation devices throughout the Inn help reduce both consumption and cost.

More visible to guests is the environmental policy statement left in each of the guest rooms; the bulk amenity dispensers in bathrooms that have allowed them to upgrade to a higher quality shampoo, conditioner and hand soap, and eliminate wasting hundreds of small plastic bottles each year; and a bed linen and towel reuse program that allows guests staying for several nights to decide for themselves if bed linens and towels get laundered or reused. Guest participation in this plan projects an annual savings of several thousand gallons of water and avoids the need to use many gallons of chemicals (detergent, bleach, and softener) that would otherwise be discharged to the septic system.

According to Shari Brown, "Guest response to the environmental initiatives we've undertaken at the Blueberry Hill Inn has been very positive, and these measures have been accomplished without diminishing the superior quality and service that guests expect. We are very proud of the efforts made by all our employees and our guests and are reminded daily that anything we do on behalf of the environment, no matter how small, makes a big difference."

Please visit the website of the Green Hotels program at: http://www.vtgreenhotels.org/

Doug Kievit-Kylar is a Pollution Prevention Planner at the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

People Corner

Erik Beck was selected to be the new Lake Champlain Basin Coordinator in the Vermont State Program Office. Prior to accepting this position, Erik worked in EPA New England as0 the Vermont Groundwater Coordinator. Prior to that he worked at EPA Region 9 for four years. Erik has a broad background that includes a B.A. and M.A. in Economics with EPA cross program experience under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition to his primary duty as a state ground water coordinator, Erik was a highly effective Team Leader for our Upper Connecticut River initiative. His diverse background will be appreciated and fully utilized in implementing the goals outlined in the Lake Champlain *Opportunities for Action*. Erik was recently married and is an avid fly fisherman.

Dave Luciano, a senior environmental engineer passed away suddenly on March 6, 2000. He was one of the most knowledgeable EPA project manager's dealing with the Construction Grants and WASTEWATER SRF programs. He would always take complex issues and work in a collaborative manner to reach a pragmatic solution. He enjoyed working with the people of Vermont to ensure environmental problems were resolved. Dave came to EPA New England in 1974 shortly after graduating from the Lowell Technical Institute (now UMASS Lowell) with a degree in civil engineering. Dave is survived by his wife Linda and their children Justin and Melanie. Dave will be missed. It was a pleasure to know and work with him.

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